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Parent Handbook

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Owners: Ashley Fournier and Brittany Griggs

Dear Families,

Thank you for choosing us to care for the most precious people in your life! We are excited to welcome you to the Building Blocks Family!

Here is a little background about both owners and how we got here…

Ashley has worked in the field of Early Childhood for over 20 years. At 16, her first job was as an Assistant Teacher at First Steps Daycare in Thompson. She earned a degree in Early Childhood Education from Quinsigamond Community College and then continued her education at Worcester State University. There, she majored in Psychology with a Concentration in Developmental Disabilities. Through the years, she has worked in numerous childcare settings in Massachusetts and Connecticut. After earning her degree in ECE, she worked at a few childcare centers in Worcester, MA, including Head Start. She also worked at Webster Fundamentals, Mary Fisher Elementary School as a Special Education Paraprofessional, The CARe (Children at Rectory) Program at Rectory School in Pomfret, which is a play-based daycare for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, where she was a Preschool Teacher. She was the Family Programs Coordinator at TEEG for a few years before buying Building Blocks. She has a little family, which includes her son, Christopher and dog, Zeus, who reside with her in Thompson.

Brittany attended Worcester State University to study Child Psychology. She worked as a Special Education Paraprofessional at Mary R Fisher Elementary School for over 10 years. She primarily worked with preschool and kindergarten but also gained experience working with children in grades 1 – 4 as well.

Building Blocks had been in operation as a daycare in Thompson, CT, for about 25 years. The previous owners decided to retire in 2020, so they put it up for sale. After finding this out, Ashley and Brittany began the process of buying the daycare. In October of 2020, they officially became the new owners, and Building Blocks was back in action!

Brittany and I both strive to make the center as "home-like," comfortable, and caring as possible. Our top priority is to make sure all children are safe, happy, and healthy, while learning skills needed to be successful members of society. We hope to provide you with a sense of relief when choosing us as your child's daycare providers!

BUILDING BLOCKS CHILDCARE PARENT HANDBOOK

Our program serves children between the ages of six weeks through six years. Tuition payments are to be made weekly and due Monday the week of care. For a child to be admitted to Building Blocks Childcare and Preschool, the family must provide the program with all the following completed forms:

- $50 registration fee, which holds your child's spot for 2 weeks **Note: a higher fee may be required to hold a spot longer than 2 weeks.**
- CT Health Assessment Record and all CT required immunizations
- Emergency contact form
- Parent-Provider Contract Agreement, including child's attendance schedule
  *Please note: this contract cannot be altered without prior discussion with Ashley or Brittany

Please read this handbook in its entirety and sign the contract form. By signing the contract, you agree to follow all policies and procedures of our center. You also agree to adhere to the weekly schedule on this agreement and if your schedule requires a change of any kind, you must inform Ashley or Brittany at least 2 weeks beforehand. If you have questions or concerns regarding policies in this handbook, please see Ashley (director/owner) or Brittany (admin/owner).

OPERATING POLICIES, PLANS AND PROCEDURES

Some policies are mandated by the Office of Early Childhood, NDDH, and Fire Marshal and cannot be altered. However, we have the right to enforce stricter policies based on the best interest of all enrolled children and staff.

The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood licenses our center. This means they oversee everything to make sure we are running safely and effectively. There are many regulations in place from the state we must always follow.

With that said, the state also puts measures in place to make sure everyone working in a childcare center is safe to work with children. All our staff must have a background check and fingerprinting by the state police department. Once everything is cleared, they can begin working in the classroom.

The state requires all staff to have yearly professional development training, Health and Safety Training upon hire, First Aid, CPR, EpiPen, and Medication Administration training.

RATIOS

Different teacher-to-child ratios depend on the age of the children. In the infant and pretoddler classrooms (ages 6 weeks to 24 months), the ratio is 4 children to 1 teacher. The older toddler classroom is for children ages 2 years to 3 years old. This classroom is allowed a 5 to 1 ratio and any group size over 5 would require an additional teacher. In the preschool classroom (ages 3 to 5), the ratio is 10 children to 1 teacher. We must follow a mixed age group's lower 4 to 1 ratio. This is the reason for contracted hours as we need to make

sure we have enough staff here at all times of the day. These ratios must always be followed while inside the building and outside on the playground.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The center is open Monday through Friday 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM. We will close two weeks out of the year. One week in June is based off the last day of school for TPS and the other week is between Christmas and New Years Day. There is one day a year we close early, at 3:00 p.m., which is the day before we close for Christmas Break. Tuition is due for both weeks we are shutdown. We follow the Thompson Public School schedule for holidays. Tuition is due weekly regardless of any absence, including sick days or vacations. In addition, tuition is due any day when the center is closed.

• Reason for shutdowns: Much needed and deserved staff breaks and cleaning purposes. There will be a deep cleaning during one of our yearly shutdowns. Both shutdowns are to give staff time to recharge and come back refreshed to continue caring for your children. Staff burn out is quite common in this field. When staff are exhausted and run down, they cannot give 100% to the children. Staff members are just as important to us as you and your children. We always want to provide everyone with the best care possible.

NOTE: Unlike almost all other centers, we pay our staff anytime the center is closed. This is another reason tuition is collected when we are closed.

CONTRACT DAYS – WEEKLY SCHEDULE

The daycare hours of operation are 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Hours of care will be discussed, and a schedule will be set. This schedule will be the child's hour per day. Care will be provided for children only during their contracted hours. These hours are based on parents' work schedules and may not exceed 9 hours per day, or 45 hours per week, for full-time children. The total number of part-time hours per week will vary as some attend 2 days and some attend 3 days per week, but the amount of time a child attends per day may not be more than 9 hours per day.

The family will notify the provider two (2) weeks in advance and in writing of any changes such as working hours, changes to employment, changes in residence, etc., so the child's files will always be updated and current. Any changes to a child's schedule must be discussed and will depend on the ability of the childcare provider to meet the child's new needs. Each time changes are made to a child's full or part-time schedule, a new contract must be signed.

No child will be accepted earlier than the scheduled hours of care unless prior arrangements have been made and agreed upon by the provider. This needs to be discussed at least 24 hours beforehand. Scheduled missed days cannot be switched to unscheduled days. All late pickups will be charged a late fee – please see the "Late Pick Up" section for amounts that will be charged.

Late arrival and early pick up does not mean children can make up time. **Children who are picked up early due to an appointment or such must remain home the rest of the day. It is too disruptive for children to come and go after 9 a.m., especially in our infant and toddler classrooms.** Please be aware that all curriculum is done in the morning, so children who arrive late miss all the planned teacher activities.

Fees charged for children who go over their contracted hours per day are to be paid upon the next billing cycle. These fees will be added to the billing section in Procare. Parents will be charged for any hours over their signed contract agreement. Fees are subject to change.

FINANCIAL AGREEMENT

Payment is due on Monday of each week. If payment is not received by Wednesday of that week and it becomes habitual, we will ask that your child does not return until payment has been made in full. Payment is due for your child's scheduled days regardless of absences, sick days, vacations, etc. Payment is also due for any day the center is closed. A **late fee of $25** will be added to the invoice **for each child enrolled** if payment is not made by Wednesday of that week. Parents may choose a weekly or monthly payment schedule. Monthly payments are to be paid in advance. **If payment is not made after two reminders, we have the right to terminate your contract and your child will not be able to return.** There is a returned check fee of $25 and a declined payment fee of $25 per transaction.

Please note, we understand families may face financial difficulties from time to time. If weekly tuition becomes a problem, please ask to speak to Ashley or Brittany. We might be able to produce a helpful solution for you.

ABSENT CHILD, LATE ARRIVAL, OR EARLY PICK UP

We ask all children to be at school by 8:30/9:00 so we each classroom can begin their daily routine with all children together. An adult must accompany your child to and from his/her classroom and sign them in and out each day using Procare. If you are picking up early, please notify your child's teacher so they can prepare for early departure.

Absences: Please let us know in Procare if your child will be absent for any reason. If a child is absent due to illness, that information needs to be shared with us. We are required by the State and Health Department to tell all enrolled families when their children have been exposed to illnesses.

Late Arrival: **Children are not allowed to be dropped off later than 9 a.m.** without prior authorization from Ashley or Brittany. A 24-hour notice is required. It is disruptive for everyone when children come in late. All curriculum, including gross motor, takes place in the morning hours between 9 and 11.

*Please note: We will accommodate late drop off for doctor appointments only with at least a 24-hour notice.

Early Pick Up: Please try to limit appointments to later in the day if possible. We understand this is out of your control sometimes, so please let us know about appointments ASAP. **Children who leave daycare for an appointment are asked to remain home the rest of the day.**

Dropping children off after receiving dental work, having been sedated by any means for a procedure, or having just had surgery the day before (or day of) is prohibited.

ITEMS TO BE SUPPLIED FOR CHILDREN

Please leave at least 2 spare outfits in your child's cubby/bin labeled with their name on it and replace as needed. Infant and toddler parents must supply diapers, wipes, bottles, baby food, formula, etc. **All children need the appropriate clothing for the weather/season daily, i.e., snow boots, rain boots, jackets, sweatshirts, and appropriate footwear.** We have some extra clothing items, but few. PLEASE LABEL EVERY ITEM THAT BELONGS TO YOUR CHILD. We are not responsible for any item that is lost, stolen or damaged.

Infant parents must supply a clean, labeled bottle for each feeding during their child's time at daycare. We are not allowed to wash bottles (we cannot even rinse them) in the classroom sinks as these sinks are strictly for hand washing only. Bottles will be sent home daily to be washed and sanitized.

Pretoddler, Toddler & Preschool parents must supply a clean, labeled, refillable cup daily. Cups and all lunch containers will be sent home "as is" to be washed. We cannot wash children's dishes in the classroom sinks. These are hand washing sinks only.

ALL CHILDREN old enough to walk must be sent to daycare with socks and sneakers for outside play! We always prefer closed toed shoes, even in summer. This is for the safety of your child. Your child may wear any type of shoes in the building, however, a pair of appropriate footwear for the playground must be packed. Examples of appropriate footwear include sneakers, sandals that strap/velcro across the back and top of foot, or girls may wear "flats" if they are comfortable to run around in outside, and rain/snow boots. Footwear that is not allowed for the playground: crocs, flip flops, any type of shoe with a heal, jelly shoes, plastic "dress up" shoes, etc.

TOYS FROM HOME POLICY

No toys from home are allowed at daycare. The only exception is a special stuffy, blanket, or other nap item the child needs for comfort. If a child brings in a special item, they may hold onto it for a brief period in the morning. The teacher will set a timer or tell the child how many more minutes they have with said item. The item will need to be placed in the child's bag or nap cot for the remainder of the day.

If other items are brought in from home that are not related to napping, you will kindly be asked to take the item back with you when you leave the center. Toys from home are a big distraction at daycare. Children typically do not want to share their own items; therefore, it causes a lot of problems. We are not responsible for any broken, lost, or stolen items. We are also not responsible when a child decides to give one of their toys away to someone else.

INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSINGS

Building Blocks Childcare and Preschool will make every effort to stay open. However, our primary concern is the safety of the children and staff. Please call ahead or message in the app if there is any doubt that we will be open. We will update our Facebook page and the Procare App if a decision is made to close. If a storm develops during the day and there is concern about the safety of the children, you will be contacted to pick up your child early using the Procare App or by phone. We will give a closing time and expect children to be picked up no later. Late pick ups will result in extra fees.

MEALS AND SNACKS

Parents must supply their child's food for the day. Foods in a lunch box should be properly labeled with their names. We have refrigerators to store foods that may be perishable and microwave ovens to warm foods. We strongly encourage healthy, nutritious foods to be sent for snacks and lunch. Water is the best to send for drinks for any age. You may send milk, apple juice, or orange juice. We have a water dispenser to refill children's cups if needed. Please try to limit the number of sugary snacks and drinks! All dishes need to be washed at home. All infant bottles will be sent home daily to be washed. We do have a supply of utensils in each classroom if needed. We sanitize then wash the utensils with dish soap and warm water after every use.

TOILETING POLICY

Our teachers will work with parents to determine an appropriate time to begin the toilet training process. Look for the following signs that your child is becoming ready for toilet training:

- Often stays dry for several hours;
- Has fully mastered walking;
- Can sit down and get up with ease;
- Can communicate by sign, sound, or word, the need to use the toilet;
- Is aware of wetting or soiling diapers and indicates that his/her diaper needs changing;
- Is in a cooperative period. (Children between two and four years of age alternate between periods of negativism and cooperation. It makes sense to wait and start toilet training when your child is most agreeable.)

Parents should consider their own schedules as well in determining the best time to begin toilet training. Vacations (extended periods of time together) may offer good opportunities, whereas periods of high stress (due to illness, job changes, etc.) in a household may make the process more difficult.

Our teachers are experienced in toilet training and will tailor each experience to the needs of your child. If your child needs privacy, help wiping, or help getting on or off the toilet, please let your teachers know so they can best serve the needs of your child. Teachers will only begin toilet training children with the consent and full support of parents. Toilet training needs to be a cooperative event, and children should be following through at home as well as at school.

TOILET TRAINING PROCEDURES: Teachers, with the support of parents, will allow a child to use the toilet as needed as well as remind the child to use the bathroom as needed. The child will be able to sit and try with a teacher's supervision and assistance, if needed. The child will wash his/her hands after each visit to the toilet. Potty chairs may be provided for a child, if needed. Strict sanitation policies for potty chairs are always followed. **If a child tries to train for one week with no success, with consistent accidents, no verbalization that child needs to go and is not showing the above signs of being ready, then we will delay toilet training for one month and then try again.** If within that month, the child shows signs of being ready we will pick up again where we left off. Teachers want each child to feel ready and comfortable with the toilet training process. Children who are ready for toilet training typically are trained (with few accidents), after one week of time. If your child has been trying for multiple weeks and is still not toilet trained, he/she may not be developmentally ready for this step. **Children generally train between 2.5 years and 4 years of age with very few children beginning the process before 2. Rushing your child to toilet train can cause anxiety and problems with self-confidence. Please do not rush this process**. Like walking, talking and other developmental milestones, a child will train when they are ready and able.

DISPOSABLE TRAINING PANTS POLICY: We support appropriate developmental toilet training practices. Therefore, "disposable training pants" or "pull-ups" without the sticky tab sides will not be allowed when children are attending our program. The "pull-up" diapers with stretchy sides require a young child to completely undress and re-dress to remove and clean themselves, which can be difficult for a child who is potty training. We realize the convenience of 'pull-ups" and will allow them for potty training purposes, if they are the ones with the tab sides that can be removed easily. Parents may also provide their children with

disposable diapers, cloth diapers with rubber pants, or cloth training pants, which all support the natural toilet training process.

PROVISIONAL ENROLLMENT

The first 30 days will be regarded as a trial period in which either party may terminate the contract without notice. After the first 30 days of enrollment, please see withdrawal/termination policies.

PROCARE APP/DAILY NOTES/COMMUNICATION

Building Blocks uses an app called Procare. This app includes everything from your child's daily activities, notes to parents, injury reports, direct communication through a messenger, billing, etc. Parents typically use this app for immediate communication with their child's teacher. Parents may also call the center at any time. This app allows teachers to see what children are signed in for the day. Parents are responsible for "signing in and signing out" their children daily using the QR code provided at the entry of each classroom. In the afternoon, parents can use the QR code on the teacher clip board if children are outside or the teacher can sign out the child.

We understand sometimes technology does not always work correctly. If the app is down for any reason, please use the phone number to call and a spreadsheet will be provided for signing children in and out.

REPORTING INJURIES/INCIDENTS TO PARENTS

Building Blocks staff will report all injuries and incidents to parents as soon as possible after the situation has occurred and the child(ren) has been cared for.

INJURY: Our priority is to make sure the injury is not an emergency and attend to the child who is hurt. Once the injury has been cared for, one of the child's teachers will notify the parent through either a direct message to the parent on Procare OR will fill out the injury report on the app which notifies the parent immediately. In either circumstance, the parent will be notified at pick up with a written injury report. This report needs to be signed by the parent and if the parent chooses, they can be given a copy of the report the next business day. The original copy will remain in the child's file.

INCIDINT: For all other incidents that may happen at daycare, a child bites, pushes, kicks, or is aggressive in any other way, a report will be written out. The parents of the child who initiated the incident will be notified with a written incident report and either a phone call home or message in Procare. The classroom teachers and director will determine the severity of the incident to make the best decision on how to contact parents. During an incident, if another child hurts a child, the hurt child will have a written injury report filled out. The teachers or director may also contact the injured child's parents by phone or through Procare depending on the severity of the injury. A staff member will provide a written injury report to the parents. Any report that is given to the parents must be signed, and a copy can be made to give to the parents the next business day. The original copy will remain in the child's file.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT/ACCESS TO PROGRAM AND FACILITY

Parent volunteers are more than welcome! Parents are encouraged to be as involved as they would like to be. Building Blocks Childcare and Preschool offers many opportunities for family involvement such as reading to children, helping during holiday celebrations, special activities, etc. The center values parents as the first and most important teachers of children. We believe communication and a good working relationship between the home and the family is especially important for the child's benefit. We would like to work with

families to provide the absolute best program for each child. Please feel free to offer any thoughts or suggestions.

• All we ask is if your child struggles with separation, it is encouraged to speak to the Director or your child's teacher about visits. We do not want to cause more anxiety for children who are not yet adjusted to their routine.

DIVERSITY

Building Blocks Childcare and Preschool welcomes all children and celebrates each family's uniqueness.

SICK POLICY

It is difficult for everyone when a child is sick. For the protection of all the children in our care, children with the following conditions will not be allowed to attend daycare until the child is symptom free for 24 hours. PLEASE NOTE: Children may need to remain out for 48 hours or more depending on symptoms. **Symptom free for 24 hours, which means once symptoms have completely gone, you will need to wait an entire 24 hours AFTER to send children back to daycare. Children must also be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.**

Symptoms include, but are not limited to:

- fever of 100.4 or higher within 24 hours
- two episodes of diarrhea within 24 hours (does not apply to food or drug reactions)
- vomiting within 24 hours
- any suspicious rash
- viral infections (ex. chicken pox, upper respiratory, lower respiratory, GI viruses, etc.)
- discolored drainage from the eye
- lice (child must undergo a full treatment and be nit free before returning to the center)

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO REFUSE A DOCTOR'S NOTE STATING A CHILD IS WELL ENOUGH TO ATTEND DAYCARE. ATTENDANCE IS PER OUR DISCRETION. Attendance is based on the overall wellness of each child and must follow current CT Public Health recommendations, the Building Blocks nurse consultant recommendations, and the final decision is made by the director. Per CT OEC State Licensing, "*…administrators of each licensed center, must follow all statutes and regulations which are considered the minimum requirements. However, administrators have the right to enforce more strict health and safety policies which serve to better protect all staff and children."* I would be happy to explain more details about the reasons why any time either in person or email!

**Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease:
Children showing signs or symptoms of HFM while in our care, especially after we have been notified of a confirmed case, will be sent home and may not return to daycare until symptom free. We may ask you to keep your children at home for up to 7 days as this virus is very contagious and can spread for weeks. A doctor's note will not override our policy to bring your child back to daycare before the proper incubation period. CHILDREN WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ATTEND DAYCARE UNTIL THE SPOTS ARE GONE.

REPORTING ILLNESS TO PARENTS: If a child becomes ill at daycare, the parents will be notified immediately either by direct message on Procare or a phone call. If the child is suspected to be contagious, they will be removed from the classroom and kept in a separate area, always supervised by staff, until picked up. If a child is sent home, they must remain home the day after, unless otherwise notified. **The child must be picked up within one hour!** If you cannot be reached within 15 minutes, we will call someone on the emergency contact list.

Upon arrival of the parent/guardian picking up the ill child, they will be provided with an Illness Report, either written or in Procare. A copy can be made to send home with the child upon request.

Children should attend daycare only if they are well enough to participate in all activities, including outdoor play. Please be courteous of others. Everyone needs to go to work and when children attend sick, it affects not only every family enrolled, but all the staff and their families as well. If we have too many staff members out sick, we cannot safely remain open, therefore disrupting every enrolled family at our center.

For a medical emergency, staff will call 911 immediately. The parents will then be called directly to notify them what happened. Along with information, the parent will be told where to meet the child if the child needs to be taken to the hospital by ambulance. A certified Head Teacher, Director or Owner will accompany the child in the ambulance to the hospital with the child's emergency information. Once the parent arrives at the hospital, the staff member may leave.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION POLICY

The center will only administer emergency medications, which include prescribed inhalers and premeasured commercially prepared injectable medication (i.e., Epi-pens, Auvi-Q, etc.), nonprescription topical medication and EMERGENCY oral medications (i.e., Benadryl).

The parental responsibilities include providing the center with the proper medication authorization form, and the medication. The medication administration form must be signed by the authorized prescriber and parent/guardian giving the center authorization to administer the medication. This form is available at the center.

The medication authorization form must include information, such as:

- The child's name, address, and birthdate
- The date the medication order was written
- Medication name, dose, and method of administration
- Time to be administered and dates to start and end the medication
- Relevant side effects and prescribers plan for management should they occur
- Notation whether the medication is a controlled drug
- Listing of allergies if any and reactions or negative interactions with foods or drugs
- Specific instructions from prescriber how medication is to be given
- Name, address, telephone number and signature of authorized prescriber ordering the drug
- Name, address, telephone number, signature, and relationship to the child of the parents
- giving permission for the administration of the drug by a staff member.

Please note that there are many variations of the medication administration form that medical providers have access to. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure the medication administration form clearly states

that it is for licensed childcare centers. Please understand that your child may not be able to attend if he/she does not have the proper authorization.

All medications must be in their original child resistant safety container and clearly labeled with the child's name, name of prescription, date of prescription, and directions for use. Except for nonprescription medications, premeasured commercially prepared injectable medications (i.e., EpiPen's), glucagon and asthma inhalant medications, all medications will be stored in a locked container and, if directed by a manufacturer, refrigerated. Controlled medications will be stored in accordance with 21a-262-10 of the RCSA. Non-prescription topical medications will be stored away from food and inaccessible to children.

Staff responsibilities include, but are not limited to, ensuring the medication administration form is complete and that the medication being received matches the medication orders and stored as directed.

The center staff will keep accurate documentation of all medications administered. Included, but not limited, in the documentation are:

- Name, address, and DOB of the child
- Name of the medication and dosage
- Pharmacy name and prescription number
- Name of authorized prescriber
- The date & time the medication was administered
- The dose that was administered
- The level of cooperation of the child
- Any medication errors
- Food and medication allergies
- Signature of the staff administering
- Any comments

Staff are trained in the administration of medication by a physician, physician assistant, APRN, or RN and renewed every three years. Training for premeasured commercially prepared injectable medications is renewed each year. At no time are untrained staff allowed to administer prescription medications.

All unused or expired medication shall be returned to the parent/ guardian or disposed of if it is not picked up within one week following the termination or the order, in the presence of at least one witness. The center shall keep a written record of the medications destroyed and shall be signed by both parties.

INFANT SAFE SLEEP POLICY

Our program has adopted the safe sleep practices recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The CT Office of Early Childhood has revised this policy, and we must follow all regulations listed below. **This is for ages 12 months and younger only.**

Our policy includes the following:

- All infants under twelve (12) months of age shall be placed in a supine (back) position for sleeping in a well-constructed, free-standing crib or bed designed for infant sleeping that meets current safety

standards, with a snug-fitting mattress unless the child has written documentation from a physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse specifying a medical reason for an alternative sleep position.

- Infants can be put in sleep sacks for naps if they are not weighted, and their arms are free. Swaddling with a blanket or velcro swaddle is no longer allowed.
- When infants can easily turn over from the supine to the prone position, they shall be put down to sleep on their back but allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer.
- No blankets, pillows, quilts, weighted sleep sacks, comforters, sheepskins, soft bumpers, or stuffed toys shall be placed under or with an infant for sleeping and kept out of the infant's crib or bed.
- No pacifier straps, clothing with hoods or strings, bibs, or necklaces shall be placed with an infant for sleeping. Articles of clothing with hoods or strings will be removed before the infant sleeps.
- No infant shall be put to sleep on a sofa, soft mattress, or other soft surface.
- No infant shall be put to sleep in a child restraint system intended for use in a vehicle, an infant carrier, a swing, or any place that is not specifically designed to be an infant bed unless the child has written documentation from a physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse specifying a medical reason for their use.
- Nothing shall be placed or hung over the side of a crib or other piece of equipment designed for sleeping that obstructs the staff's visibility of the infant.
- Infants will be checked on every 15 minutes when they are sleeping. Infants are never left in the classroom unattended during naps.

**Young infants will be on their own schedule until they are old enough to adapt to a more routine nap schedule. As babies grow, they require less sleep. Naps will typically go from 3 times per day, down to 2, and eventually down to 1 nap. Eventually, we must adjust each child to the center's routine. This routine is reduced to 1 nap from 1230 to 230 each day. The infant teachers will need to begin this process when the child turns 1 year old. This is to get the child ready to move into the pretoddler room. Once the child turns a year old, they will begin sleeping on a nap cot and can use blankets. Most children, by 14 months or so, are ready to reduce to 1 nap per day. We understand every child is different!

PACIFIRE AND BOTTLE POLICY

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, infants should begin to wean off pacifiers between the ages of 12 to 18 months, as evidence shows that it is not in the best interest of the child to continue use. Once a child enters the Pretoddler Room (ages 12 months to 24 months), we will not allow them to use a pacifier during the day while at the center. One can be left here for the child to use at nap time only. Please do not let your child enter the building with one in his/her mouth. This is for your child's best interest and development! We have seen a high increase in children needing speech/language services due to extended use of pacifiers, bottles, and too much screen time.

Once a child is old enough to begin drinking milk, it is highly recommended that they stop using bottles. This is also a recommendation from the AAP. When a child is old enough to enter the Pretoddler Room, they should be drinking from cups/water bottles only.

Infants can start drinking water at around 6 months old. It is highly recommended that infants begin using a straw cup for water as soon as possible. Straw cups are great for infants because they encourage children to develop a more advanced way of sucking and swallowing. It strengthens the lip, tongue, and cheek muscles for speech and language development!

NAP/QUIET TIME POLICY

Children under 6 need to rest quietly on their cots for 45 minutes before they can have a quiet activity given to them. Children can have books, coloring, or something else of the teacher's choice after the 45 minutes have gone by. If and only if the child is still awake, they will be given a quiet activity to do on their cots. We cannot guarantee children stay awake on their cot the entire nap time. After an hour of sleep, teachers will wake a child up if requested by parents. If the child then falls back to sleep, we will not keep waking them up. Nap time is around 2 hours or less each day.

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Curriculum will be written weekly for each age group. It will be developmentally appropriate according to each individual child, as well as the group altogether. There will be a mixture of child-initiated and teacher-initiated activities.

Children two years of age or younger shall not have access to mobile cellular telephones, laptops and desktop computers or equipment that can play a video game or digital video disk. Access to mobile cellular telephones, laptop and desktop computers or equipment that can play a video game or digital video disk by children two years of age and older shall be restricted to educational or physical activity purposes only.

The weekly written plan for all classrooms will include the following:

- The use of a variety of indoor and outdoor environments based on the children's interest, individual needs, and the learning to be addressed;
- A flexible schedule that allows time for children to make choices, continue projects over time and transition from one activity to another;
- Learning experiences that are relevant to the children's lives and cultural context.
- A balance of child-initiated and teacher-initiated experiences;
- Exploration and discovery;
- The use of a variety of materials that support active engagement and promote skills across areas of learning and development;
- Rest, sleep or quiet activities;
- Nutritious meals and snacks;
- Toileting and clean up;
- Individual and small group activities; and
- Daily moderate and vigorous physical activity for children three years of age and older unless a child has a disability or is experiencing a developmental delay, as defined in section 10-76a of the Connecticut General Statutes, which prevents such child from engaging in such physical activity. Such activity should take place outdoors.

DAILY OUTDOOR PLAY

At our center, our philosophy ensures children get ample amounts of time outdoors. A play based, nature-based, emergent curriculum encourages higher order thinking, exploring, investigating, creativity, and imagination inside as well as outside.

Outdoor exploration is provided daily. Often the weather is cold, rainy, or snowy. Children must be dressed appropriately according to the weather each day. This may entail snowsuits, boots, hats, snow gloves, and jackets. Our time outside in colder temperatures will be limited according to temperature (20 or 30 minutes).

The same goes for when it is hot during summer months. We will go outside when it is hot. Most times, we have water play using sprinklers or water tables to keep children cool. We also bring water outside for each child and apply sunscreen daily.

All children are required to have appropriate footwear for the weather daily. Sneakers, rain books, and snow boots are the best options for daycare. Children are not allowed to wear sandals, flip flops, crocs, dress shoes, or shoes with heels on the playground due to safety concerns.

EMERGENCY PLANS

Medical: In the case of a medical emergency, 911 will be called first and then parents will be called. Your child will be taken to Day Kimball Hospital by ambulance for care. A head teacher, director or owner of Building Blocks will ride with the child in an ambulance with contact information of the parents. (Also see Sick Policy)

Fire: In the event of a fire, evacuation from the building will be through the closest fire exit. Exit plans are posted in each classroom. Staff will supervise the children under their care to lead them out safely. They will quickly and calmly exit the building and lead the children to the furthest point back to the playground. At that point, staff will take name-to-face attendance. All staff have the Procare app on their phones, which enables us to always have access to each child's emergency contacts and attendance record. There is a first aid kit in the toy shed on the playground for any injuries that occur. If for some reason we cannot reenter the building, we will walk all the children to the Town Library (diagonally across the street). The Director or person in charge will be responsible for taking all paper copies of emergency files outside, portable first aid kit, and cell phone. Parents will be notified as soon as possible. Fire extinguishers are available in the building. Fire drills are practiced with the children to ensure they will know the procedure. We include fire safety as part of our yearly curriculum.

Weather: For weather related emergencies, such as tornadoes or hurricanes, staff and children will remain indoors away from windows and doors. Children will be led down to the basement of the building in the event of an extreme storm. Staff will carry little ones who cannot yet walk. We do have two exits out of the basement if needed. Staff will take attendance using name-to-face check once everyone is safely together. Parents will be notified as soon as possible.

Evacuation: If for some reason we need to evacuate the facility, staff will walk the children to the town library. Advanced contact has been made with CT State Police (Troop D) adding Building Blocks Childcare to their list of emergencies. Parents will be notified to pick up their children as soon as possible. Staff will remain with the children until they are all picked up.

Shelter in Place/Lockdown: Should an emergency or threatening activity in or around the center require the need to stay put, we will shelter in a safe location inside away from doors or windows. This means each group of children will remain in their classrooms with teachers for the duration of the lockdown. Teachers will keep preschool children altogether in one area of the classroom as they are old enough to do so. If we are on the playground, teachers will gather all the children to go inside. Once safe inside the building, we will do a head count, make sure all doors and windows are closed and locked, and close all curtains and blinds. We will notify all parents NOT to pick up the children until the emergency is over. Staff will have appropriate supplies available for the comfort and engagement of the children.

Accommodations for infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities or chronic medical conditions: In any emergency, infants will be placed in cribs and wheeled outside to proper safety locations. Each crib has wheels to make it a simple, quick way to get them out safely. Children over 12 months who may not be steady on their feet will be put in strollers which allows for a smoother transition. Necessities required such as diapers, wipes, formula, medication, or other comfort items will be brought with staff and children during any emergency that requires us to evacuate the property or gather in the basement.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT/DISCIPLINE POICY

The goal of discipline is to help the child develop self-control and move toward appropriate social behavior.

Positive guidance will be used when disputes arise among children or between a child and staff. The staff will encourage a "talking out" process where the goal is to acknowledge feelings and find solutions using the children's ideas wherever possible.

- Staff will encourage and model positive behavior, positive reinforcement, the use of peer support and clearly defined rules.
- A child who may be aggressive or who is disruptive or destructive of other children's work may be asked to make an activity choice in another area.
- Staff may use a quiet spot for a child struggling with behaviors. The child may be asked to sit in a resting space, a quiet area, or at a table not in use with books to calm down. Staff will address the child after tantrum episode has ended and the child is settled enough to talk it out.
- Staff will continuously supervise children during disciplinary actions.
- Staff will not be abusive, neglectful, or use corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment under any circumstances. No child will be disciplined or punished using physical treatments such as spanking, slapping, pinching, shaking, and striking in any way.

WITHDRAWAL OF CHILDREN

Parents or guardians must provide the center with two weeks' written notice prior to withdrawing their child from the center. All tuition owed must be paid in full, which includes the last two weeks the child is enrolled. Likewise, if possible, the center will provide the same courtesy if care for a child must be terminated for any reason. The center will work with all children and families to avoid a child's expulsion.

TERMINATION POLICY

The Director has the right to terminate any child whose behavior is excessively aggressive towards staff or other children on a consistent basis. It is a teacher's job to keep all children in their care safe. It is the Directors job to ensure safety for all staff, children, and families.

A child who hits, kicks, bites, slaps, scratches, spits, swears, pulls hair, pushes, or shows any other aggression towards others will be closely monitored. The classroom teacher will document such behaviors and will report to the director immediately. The teacher and/or director will stay connected with parents on a regular basis about these behaviors.

Staff will make every attempt at changing the child's aggressive behavior to ensure safety for others. If all efforts have been exhausted, the director has the right to expel the child from the program indefinitely.

If the Director suspects educational neglect, the Director has the right to file a report with DCF at any time.

SOCIAL MEDIA, PICTURES, AND VIDEOS

Staff will never post pictures or videos of children from the center on any personal social media sites. Staff can take pictures and videos of children for the purposes of educational observations and documentation which will be saved on the Procare App only. Staff can send pictures and videos to parents using the Procare app to show activities their children are engaged in at daycare.

The owners may use any pictures on Procare to upload to the center's Facebook page. There may be times when pictures are used for marketing purposes as well as on documents or brochures.

If you DO NOT want your child's pictures or videos on public social media or documents, please do not sign that section at the end of this packet! You may also ask to speak to your child's teacher, Ashley, or Brittany, anytime.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is important to us at our center. The only people that will know personal information about a family or child are the child's immediate teachers, Ashley, and Brittany. Sensitive information will not be shared with anyone else unless deemed necessary. The only exception would be if an opening or closing staff member needed to know something of importance.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT/MANDATED REPORTING

All staff members are mandated reporters and have the right to file with DCF for suspected abuse or neglect. If such an issue comes up, the staff member will bring it to the attention of the director. The director will then determine the best course of action (to file or not). This can be done without parents' consent as it is for the safety of the child. If you have any questions about this matter, please ask the director.

DCF Phone Number: 1-800-842-2288

Staff training is completed yearly on this topic. We review the Child Abuse and Neglect Policy, prevention and detection of child abuse and neglect and the reporting requirements as a mandated reporter.

Definition of child abuse:

- Any non-accidental physical or mental injury
- Any form of sexual abuse
- Neglect of child (failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, mental care, and supervision)
- Emotional abuse
- At risk behavior

As childcare providers, we are required by law to report any suspicion that a child is being abused, neglected or at risk.

Reporting a case of suspected abuse and neglect are as follows:

- Call DCF within 12 hours of suspected abuse or neglect.
- Reporters' names are required but can be kept confidential.
- Verbal report is given over the phone.
- A written report must follow within 48 hours of verbal report.

Staff are protected by law from retaliation or discrimination for reporting.

All calls to DCF will be documented and kept on file at Building Blocks.

We have zero tolerance for abuse and neglect. Immediate action will be taken upon suspicion that a staff member has abused or neglected a child. The child will be protected, and parents will be notified by phone immediately. Any staff member will be removed from their position immediately until the investigation is complete.

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

The staff to child ratio for preschool (ages 2.8 to 6) is always 1 staff member to 10 children. This includes outside on the playground. The staff to child ratio for infants and toddlers (any child under the age of 3 not yet moved into preschool) is always 1 staff member to 4 children.

When there is a mixed age group, the ratios must adhere to the youngest child in the group. Children are always supervised by sight and sound. This includes children in the classrooms, bathrooms, outside (for walking trips to the park or library), on the playground.

Transportation – All children will be supervised by sight and sound while getting on and off any mode of transportation. For example, children who attend MRFES and must take the bus or van. We do not provide our own transportation for children for any reason currently.

Playground – A head count will be taken by staff before leaving the building. Children will be escorted to their designated area by staff assisting them with walking if needed. Children who cannot walk may be put into strollers to easily move more than one child to the playground at a time. Children will be strapped into buckles while in the stroller or buggy. Once the group enters the play area, they will do another head count. Children will never go inside the building unless accompanied by a staff member. Staff always have phones with them outside and no staff member is allowed to be outside alone with their group of children even if they have a phone on them. There will be at least two staff members always present inside or outside.

When there are woodchips or any other material that consists of small pieces on the playground, accessible to children under the age of three, staff shall:

- Be sure that all staff are aware that the woodchips pose a choking hazard to children under the age of three.
- Always have a phone outside in case of emergency.
- At least one CPR certified staff member will be on the playground whenever there are children under the age of three using the playground.

Field Trips - Staff/child ratios will be maintained while off site. All children must have signed permission slips prior to leaving the building. Staff must bring each child's emergency contact information and the first aid kit on the field trip.

FIELD TRIP PROCEDURES

Occasionally, the preschool class and older toddler class will go on a "walking" field trip to Riverside Park. Procedures for this are as follows:

Parents will be notified in advance with all information about the field trip.

Parents have the right to choose if their child participates in the event. If not, we will ask that child to remain at home on the day of the trip. The reason for this is there will not be any staff members in their classroom to stay with the child. Payment is required for the day even if you choose not to send your child (not for the trip, only daily tuition).

Parents will sign a permission slip ahead of time. Children who do not have signed permission slips will not be able to attend and will be asked to get picked up from daycare.

Staff will take a first aid kit, water, cups, children's lunches (if applicable), all emergency contact forms for each child attending and staff will also have the Procare app available on their phones for direct communication if needed.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

A staff person should call the director and inform her of the situation. Two staff persons 18 years or older will always remain at the program with the child. If the child has not been picked up within 15 minutes of closing time (5:30 pm) a staff person will attempt to call the child's parent/guardian from numbers on enrollment form found in child's file. If they cannot reach parent or guardian, the staff person will attempt to call the emergency number and alternate adults provided by parent/guardian at time of enrollment. The police will be called 30 minutes after closing time if no one can be reached on the child's Emergency Contact form. At that time, the child will be released to police. Staff will continue to try and reach the parent/guardian.

Children must be picked up at their scheduled pick up time each day - **there are no exceptions**. Parents will be charged $1.00 per minute beyond their contracted pick up time for the first offence if notice is not given to staff ahead of time. We understand emergencies happen. If this is a habitual situation, it could lead to termination of the contract.

Warning and fee schedule will be as follows:

- Late pick up with notice from parent ahead of time: $1.00 per minute
- Late pick up without notice:
  - First offense: $1.00 per minute
  - Second offense: $5.00 per minute
  - Third offense: child will be suspended from care for 2 days and payment will be required
  - Fourth offense: contract will be terminated